

**H. R. 351.**

[Report No. 411.]

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IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

JULY 24, 1850.

Read twice, and committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union.

DECEMBER 12, 1850.

Ordered to be printed, with the amendments offered in Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union.

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Mr. POTTER, from the Committee on Post Offices and Post Roads, reported the following bill:

**A BILL**

To reduce and modify the rates of postage in the United States.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Represen-*  
2       *tatives of the United States of America in Congress*  
3       *assembled,* That letters carried in the mail of the United  
4       States shall be charged with postage as follows:

5       Upon each letter not weighing over one half ounce,  
6       when postage is paid where such letter is mailed, three  
7       cents; and for each additional half ounce, or fraction of  
8       half an ounce, when so prepaid, there shall be charged  
9       three cents. There shall be charged upon each unpaid  
10      letter weighing not more than one-half ounce five cents,

11 and for each additional half ounce, or fraction of half an  
12 ounce, when so unpaid, the sum of five cents.

1        SEC. 2. *And be it further enacted,* There shall be  
2 charged on each newspaper, of no greater size than nine-  
3 teen hundred square inches, transmitted through the mails  
4 from the office of publication to any place out of the State  
5 where published, the sum of one cent; and for any such  
6 newspaper delivered within the State where published, the  
7 sum of one-half cent; and for each newspaper of larger  
8 dimensions than above specified, shall be charged with  
9 an additional rate for each additional nineteen hundred  
10 square inches or fraction thereof. And all pamphlets, peri-  
11 odicals, magazines, and every other description of printed  
12 matter, (except newspapers,) which shall be unconnected  
13 with any manuscript or written matter, and which it is, or  
14 may be lawful to transmit through the mails of the United  
15 States, shall be chargeable with postage at the rate of two  
16 cents for each copy sent of no greater weight than one  
17 ounce, and one cent in addition for each additional ounce,  
18 or fraction of an ounce. Bound books not weighing over  
19 thirty-two ounces shall be deemedailable matter under  
20 the foregoing provisions, any thing in the fifteenth section  
21 of the act approved March third, eighteen hundred and  
22 forty-five, to the contrary notwithstanding.

1        SEC. 3. *And be it further enacted*, The directors of  
 2 the mints in the United States are authorized and required  
 3 to coin peices of the value of three cents, composed of  
 4 three parts silver and one part alloy, which shall be a law-  
 5 ful tender for all debts due to the Government of the United  
 6 States, and to individuals, persons, and corporations.

1        SEC. 4. *And be it further enacted*, It shall be the  
 2 duty of the Postmaster General to provide and furnish to  
 3 all deputy postmasters, and other persons applying and  
 4 paying therefor, suitable stamps of the denomination of  
 5 three cents to facilitate the prepayment of the postages  
 6 provide for in this act. And to any person who shall de-  
 7 sire to purchase of the Postmaster General, or of any  
 8 deputy postmaster at any one time, an amount of stamps  
 9 to the value of fifty dollars or upwards, such stamps shall  
 10 be furnished at a discount of ten per cent. upon their par  
 11 value. All deputy postmasters who shall receive at any  
 12 one time stamps to the amount of fifty dollars, shall be al-  
 13 lowed a deduction of ten per cent. upon the par value.

1        SEC. 5. *And be it further enacted*, That there is  
 2 hereby appropriated out of any money in the treasury not  
 3 otherwise appropriated, the sum of one million five hun-  
 4 dred thousand dollars to supply any deficiency that may  
 5 arise in the Post Office Department.

# AMENDMENTS

Offered in Committee of the Whole on the State of the Union:

Mr. POTTER'S amendment—

Strike out all after the enacting clause, and insert:

1        That letters carried in the mail of the United States  
2 shall be charged with postage as follows:

3        Upon each letter not weighing over one-half ounce,  
4 three cents; and for each additional half ounce or fraction  
5 of half an ounce, three cents.

1        SEC. 2. *And be it further enacted,* There shall be  
2 charged upon each newspaper, pamphlet, periodical, mag-  
3 azine, book, and every other description of printed matter,  
4 which shall be unconnected with any manuscript or written  
5 matter, and which it may be lawful to transmit through  
6 the mail, of no greater weight than two ounces, one cent;  
7 and for each additional ounce, or fraction of an ounce, one  
8 cent. Bound books, not weighing over thirty ounces, shall  
9 be deemed mailable matter under the provisions of this  
10 section: *Provided,* That newspapers delivered in the  
11 State where printed shall be chargeable with only one-half  
12 the foregoing rates.

1        SEC. 3. *And be it further enacted,* That the directors  
2 of the Mint in the United States are authorized and re-  
3 quired to coin pieces of the value of three cents, composed

4 of three parts silver and one part alloy, which shall be a  
5 lawful tender for all debts of thirty dollars or under, due  
6 to the United States, and to individuals, persons, and cor-  
7 porations.

1       **SEC. 4. *And be it further enacted,*** It shall be the  
2 duty of the Postmaster General to provide and furnish to  
3 all deputy postmasters, and other persons applying and  
4 paying therefor, suitable stamps of the denomination of  
5 three cents, to facilitate the prepayment of the postages  
6 provided for in this act. And to any person who shall de-  
7 sire to purchase of the Postmaster General, or of any  
8 deputy postmaster, at any one time, an amount of stamps  
9 to the value of fifty dollars or upwards, such stamps shall  
10 be furnished at a discount of ten per cent. upon their par  
11 value. All deputy postmasters who shall receive at any  
12 one time stamps to the amount of fifty dollars, shall be al-  
13 lowed a deduction of ten per cent. upon the par value.

1       **SEC. 5. *And be it further enacted,*** That there is  
2 hereby appropriated, out of any money in the treasury not  
3 otherwise appropriated, the sum of one million five hun-  
4 dred thousand dollars, to supply any deficiency that may  
5 arise in the Post Office Department.

1       **SEC. 6. *And be it further enacted,*** There shall be  
2 charged upon all letters transported in the mails from any  
3 of the Atlantic ports in the United States to any of the

4 ports in the United States upon the Pacific, or from any  
 5 of the ports in the United States upon the Pacific to any  
 6 of the Atlantic ports in the United States, four times the  
 7 usual rates; and upon all newspapers, pamphlets, periodi-  
 8 cals, magazines, books, or other printed matter herein pro-  
 9 vided for, three times the usual rates.

Mr. ASHMUN's substitute—

A BILL for the reduction of postage on letters, periodicals,  
 and pamphlets.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Repre-*  
 2 *sentatives of the United States of America in Congress*  
 3 *assembled,* That from and after the first day of July next  
 4 the postage on all letters shall be as follows: All letters,  
 5 not exceeding half an ounce in weight, conveyed any dis-  
 6 tance within the United States, shall be charged with two  
 7 cents postage, and a like sum for every additional half  
 8 ounce, or fractional part thereof, the postage being pre-  
 9 paid in all cases; and all drop letters, or letters to be de-  
 10 livered at the office where deposited, shall be charged with  
 11 one cent postage, to be prepaid.

1       SEC. 2 *And be it further enacted,* That it shall be  
 2 the duty of the Postmaster General to provide suitable  
 3 letter stamps for the prepayment of postage, of the several  
 4 denominations of two, four, and ten cents, and such others  
 5 as he may deem expedient, and cause them to be furnished

6 and kept for sale in each of the post offices of the United  
 7 States; and any deputy postmaster who shall fail by his  
 8 own neglect to have the same for sale, to any person ap-  
 9 plying therefor, shall be liable to a penalty of five dollars  
 10 for every such failure, to be recovered by the person so  
 11 applying. That any person who shall counterfeit, alter, or  
 12 forge, any letter stamps, or shall knowingly have in his  
 13 possession any such false, forged or altered letter stamps,  
 14 with intent to sell or use the same as genuine, shall be  
 15 deemed to be guilty of felony, and be punished by a fine  
 16 not exceeding five hundred dollars, or by imprisonment  
 17 not exceeding five years.

1     SEC. 3. *And be it further enacted*, That the postage  
 2 on newspapers shall be charged, for any distance in the  
 3 United States, one cent; and periodicals and pamphlets  
 4 shall be charged half a cent for each ounce, and the same  
 5 for every additional half ounce or fractional part thereof;  
 6 handbills and circulars shall be charged letter postage, pre-  
 7 paid, and all newspapers not sent from the office of publi-  
 8 cation shall be charged one cent, prepaid: *And provided*,  
 9 *also*, That bound books may be carried in the mails on  
 10 prepayment of one cent per ounce.

1     SEC. 4. *And be it further enacted*, That if the pub-  
 2 lishers of newspapers, periodicals, and pamphlets, desire  
 3 to prepay the postage on depositing them at the post office

4 they shall be allowed a discount of fifty per cent. for all  
5 such newspapers, periodicals, or pamphlets, deposited and  
6 paid for.

1       SEC. 5. *And be it further enacted*, That if, by rea-  
2 son of this act, the compensation of any deputy postmas-  
3 ter shall be reduced below the present rate, the Postmaster  
4 General is hereby authorized, at his discretion, to increase  
5 such compensation as far as justice may require, having  
6 regard for the amount of labor, and the character of the  
7 service performed: *Provided*, That the whole amount of  
8 compensation in any year shall not exceed the amount al-  
9 lowed in the same office in the fiscal year ending the first  
10 day of July, eighteen hundred and fifty; and whenever a  
11 new post office shall be established, the Postmaster Gene-  
12 ral may fix the amount of annual compensation of the  
13 deputy postmaster, at a rate not larger than is allowed to  
14 existing offices requiring the same amount of service.

1       SEC. 6. *And be it further enacted*, That it shall be the  
2 duty of the Postmaster General, at all post offices where  
3 the postmasters are appointed by the President of the Uni-  
4 ted States, to provide for conveying letters to the post of-  
5 fice by establishing suitable and convenient places of de-  
6 posit, and by employing carriers to receive and deposit  
7 them in the post office, and at all such offices it shall also  
8 be his duty to cause letters to be delivered by suitable car-



riers, to be appointed by him for that purpose, for which not exceeding one cent shall be charged ; and on advertised letters there shall be an additional charge not exceeding one cent.

SEC. 7. *And be it further enacted,* That the franking privilege, except so far as it may have been conferred by Congress upon individuals as a mark of respect and honor, is hereby abolished, and the postage on all documents published by either House of Congress, and all communications to or from either House, mailed during the session, including speeches delivered therein, and all communications to and from the officers of either House upon public service, shall be paid out of the contingent funds of the respective Houses, under such regulations as each House shall prescribe for itself ; and all communications to and from the general departments of the Government, properly chargeable to the public service, shall be marked as such, and the postage thereon be paid like other contingent expenses of the Government.

SEC. 8 *And be it further enacted,* That the Postmaster General be, and he is hereby, authorized to draw upon the Treasury, under such checks as are provided in the act of July two, eighteen hundred and thirty-six, entitled " An act to change the organization of the Post Office Department, and to provide more effectually for the settlement

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7 of the accounts thereof," or by any other law, any amount  
 8 exceeding the actual postages of the year, which may be  
 9 needed for any of the purposes specified in the second sec-  
 10 tion of the act of eighteen hundred and thirty-six, afore-  
 11 said : *Provided*, The same shall not, in addition to the ac-  
 12 tual amount of postages, exceed the aggregate sum ap-  
 13 propriated in each year, under the third section of the said  
 14 act of eighteen hundred and thirty-six ; and such difference  
 15 between the actual amount of postages and the amount  
 16 appropriated by law, shall be paid, on the requisition of the  
 17 Postmaster General as aforesaid, out of any moneys in the  
 18 Treasury not otherwise appropriated.

1        SEC. 9. *And be it further enacted*, That the directors  
 2 of the Mints in the United States are authorised and re-  
 3 quired to coin pieces of the value of two cents, composed  
 4 of three parts silver and one part alloy, which shall be a  
 5 lawful tender for all debts due to the Government of the  
 6 United States, and to individuals, persons, and corporations.

1        SEC. 10. *And be it further enacted*, That all acts, or  
 2 parts of acts, inconsistent with this act, be, and the same  
 3 are hereby repealed.

Mr. CARTTER's amendments—

1        In Section 1, 6th line, strike out the word *three* and  
 2 insert *five*.

3        And in Section 2, after word *ounce* in 18th line, insert

4 the following proviso : *Provided*, That no postage shall  
 5 be charged upon any newspaper mailed and delivered  
 6 within the county where published.

Mr. SACKETT's amendment—

Strike out from the second section the following :

1 "From the office of publication to any place out of  
 2 the State where published, the sum of one cent ; and for  
 3 any such newspaper delivered within the State where pub-  
 4 lished, the sum of one-half cent ; and for each newspaper  
 5 of larger dimensions than above specified, shall be charged  
 6 with an additional rate for each additional nineteen hun-  
 7 dred square inches or fraction thereof"—

And insert in lieu thereof the following :

1 To any place out of the State where published, one  
 2 cent postage, and for every such newspaper transmitted  
 3 through the mails out of the county where published, in the  
 4 same State, there shall be charged one-half cent postage ;  
 5 and for every newspaper transmitted through the mails in  
 6 the county, or within thirty miles of the place where pub-  
 7 lished, two mills postage.

At the end of the second section :

1 *And provided further*, That newspapers delivered  
 2 in the county, or within thirty miles of the place where  
 3 published, shall be chargeable with only two mills postage  
 4 for each paper.

**Mr. Wm. J. Brown's amendment—**

Strike out the first section of the original bill and insert the following in lieu thereof:

1        That from and after the thirtieth day of June, eigh-  
2    teen hundred and fifty-one, letters carried in the mail of the  
3    United States shall be charged with the following rates of  
4    postage: On all letters not exceeding half an ounce in  
5    weight five cents, and for every additional half ounce or  
6    fraction thereof, there shall be charged the like sum of  
7    five cents additional, and all drop letters two cents.